



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

GENESEE COUNTY MAN SENTENCED TO 30 MONTHS FOR POSSESSING CHILD PORN

ICE special agents seized a computer, CDs and videotapes under “Operation Predator”

FLINT, Mich, — A Genesee County man was sentenced today to 30 months in prison, a \$20,000 fine and three years of supervised release for possessing child pornography, following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Dominique Merritt, 25, was sentenced in U.S. District Court by the Honorable Judge Paul V. Gadola after pleading guilty to possessing child pornography. The investigation began in May 2004 when ICE agents, assisted by Genesee County Sheriff’s Department, executed search warrants at Merritt’s residence at 8211 Tewksberry Pl., Grand Blanc, Mich. ICE special agents seized a computer tower, a memory stick, compact discs, a video camera and videocassettes, all of which were suspected of being used to transmit child pornography via the Internet.

Merritt was arraigned in March 2005 before the Honorable Magistrate Judge Wallace Capel. Merritt’s arrest is part of an ongoing nationwide ICE initiative called Operation Predator, which is designed to protect children from sexual exploitation. Following are two other prominent local arrests made under this initiative:

- In October 2003, ICE agents began an investigation when the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) requested assistance regarding an individual believed to be molesting children. The investigation ultimately identified the individual as Guy Lendrum. Lendrum admitted to molesting five children, the youngest victim being 18 months old and one of the youngest victims molested under ICE’s Operation Predator. He was convicted and sentenced to at least 19 years in prison.

- In December 2003, ICE agents, assisted by Oakland County Sheriff's Department, executed two search warrants in Saginaw, Mich., at the residence and workplace of Brian Urbaniwiz. During the interview Urbaniwiz admitted molesting his 12-year-old, and his 9-year-old twin sons. Urbanawiz ultimately pleaded guilty to child sex crimes last year and was sentenced to between four and 20 years in prison for communicating to commit a crime, and to 35 to 60 years for molestation.

"This case and the other cases resulting from Operation BuddyList reveal the disturbing truth that some adults will go to great lengths to exploit and molest children," said Brian M. Moskowitz, special agent-in-charge of the ICE Detroit Office of Investigations. "While we cannot give back the innocence to those who were abused and exploited, we can make sure that justice is served. The great cooperative efforts of the Detroit area local, state and federal law enforcement and prosecuting agencies involved in this case, helped ensure that justice was indeed served on behalf of these child victims."

Operation Predator is ICE's comprehensive initiative to safeguard children from foreign national pedophiles, international sex tourists, Internet child pornographers, and human traffickers. Since Operation Predator began in July 2003, the initiative has resulted in more than 6,225 child predator arrests throughout the country-an average of 250 arrests per month, or eight arrests per day. Over 154 child predators have been apprehended in Michigan.

To enhance all these efforts to protect children, ICE has formed partnerships with several non-governmental organizations, including the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and World Vision's child sex tourism prevention project, to provide prevention and deterrence information to the public. ICE plans to expand these partnerships in the coming year.

Members of the public wishing to report suspicious activity may contact ICE at 1-866-DHS-2ICE or Operation.Predator@dhs.gov. Additionally, NCMEC can be contacted at 1-800-843-5678 or at <http://www.cybertipline.com>. Additional information about the operation is posted at: www.ice.gov.

The Genesee County Sheriff's Department and the FBI assisted with this investigative. Nancy Abraham, U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division prosecution this case.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.